

News Advisory

From the Rhode Island Judiciary



Attorney is first woman appointed Rhode Island state court administrator

August 20, 2021: Attorney Julie P. Hamil, currently the general counsel for the Rhode Island Supreme Court, will become the next state court administrator on August 23, 2021, when she succeeds J. Joseph Baxter Jr., who is retiring after 17 years in the post.

Appointed by Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, Hamil will be the first woman to hold the Judiciary's top administrative position. She has been general counsel since 2016 and was deputy general counsel for eight years prior to that.

"I have the utmost confidence in Ms. Hamil's knowledge of our Judiciary and in her ability to lead judicial staff and programs into the future," Chief Justice Suttell said. "I am grateful for Mr. Baxter's decades of dedicated service and his support and guidance in improving court operations, including technology advancements."

With the dual role of administrator of the Supreme Court and state court administrator comes the responsibility to act upon all administrative matters affecting the operation of the Judiciary. As such, the position has oversight of the Supreme Court departments that serve the entire state court system: judicial technology; finance and budget; employee relations; community outreach, and facilities. In her new role, Hamil expects to continue to pursue the initiatives championed by the Chief Justice, such as improving access to justice and ensuring racial and ethnic fairness in the courts.

"I am grateful to Chief Justice Suttell for giving me the opportunity to follow in Joe Baxter's footsteps and to become the first female Rhode Island State Court Administrator," Hamil said. In the thirteen years I have spent in the Judiciary's Office of General Counsel, I have developed a deep appreciation for the work of the courts. Our employees and our bench are committed to the Judiciary's mission and to continually evaluating and enhancing how we carry out that mission. Through the pandemic we learned that we as a branch of government are much more adaptable and agile than we ever thought we could be. I look forward to building on the improvements and efficiencies realized because of the pandemic to further enhance the administration of justice in Rhode Island. I am indebted to Joe Baxter for his leadership, his support and his friendship."

As general counsel, Hamil provided legal advice to the Chief Justice, members of the Judiciary, the Administrative Office of State Courts and all courts within the unified judicial system.

Prior to joining the Judiciary, Hamil worked as an assistant district attorney in Middlesex County in Massachusetts, where she tried numerous cases before juries in the District Courts of Lowell, Newton and Malden. Prior and subsequent to her time as an assistant district attorney, she worked as a civil litigator in Boston and in Rhode Island with the firm of Oliverio & Marcaccio LLP.

A lifelong Rhode Islander, Hamil graduated from St. Mary Academy – Bay View and went on to receive her undergraduate degree from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. She later earned her law degree from Suffolk University School of Law in Boston. A resident of East Greenwich and native of Bristol, Hamil is married and the mother of three children.

Baxter, of Smithfield, retires after 38 years of service to the Judiciary. He started in the Family Court, where he was a courtroom clerk, ultimately rising to the post of Family Court administrator, before joining the Supreme Court as assistant state court administrator for employee relations and security. In 2004, then Chief Justice Frank J. Williams appointed him state court administrator.

“It has been an honor and privilege to have worked in the Rhode Island Judiciary for the past 38 years,” Baxter said. “I am most proud of the dedication and outstanding work produced by our employees and judicial officers each and every day in serving the people of Rhode Island. Under the leadership of Chief Justice Paul Suttell, our judicial branch is well-positioned to meet the changing needs of those we serve.”

During his tenure as the Judiciary’s top administrator, Baxter oversaw the transition to a new case management system with an electronic filing component, the construction of the Noel Judicial Complex in Warwick and the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal in Cranston, the restoration of all courtrooms in the 88-year-old Licht Judicial Complex, the implementation of separation of powers in 2004 and numerous capital projects.

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